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			FLYNN, KEVIN H	
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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Application No. Applicant(s) 10/541,288 STUMM ET AL. Office Action Summary Examiner Art Unit KEVIN FLYNN 3628 -- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --Period for Reply A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS. WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION. Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication. If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication - Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b). Status 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on <u>07 October 2008</u>. 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final. 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under Ex parte Quayle, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213. Disposition of Claims 4) Claim(s) 25-43 and 46-48 is/are pending in the application. 4a) Of the above claim(s) is/are withdrawn from consideration. 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed. 6) Claim(s) 25-43 and 46-48 is/are rejected. 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to. 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement. Application Papers 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner. 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner. Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abevance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a). Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d). 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152. Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f). a) All b) Some * c) None of: Certified copies of the priority documents have been received. 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)). * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

PTOL-326 (Rev. 08-06)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/S5/08)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date ______.

Attachment(s)

Interview Summary (PTO-413)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date.

6) Other:

Notice of Informal Patent Application

Art Unit: 3628

DETAILED ACTION

Status of Claims

This action is in reply to the response filed on 7 October 2008.

- Claims 25-38, 41, 43, 46, 48 have been amended.
- 3. Claims 44-45 have been canceled.
- Claims 25-43, 46-48 are currently pending and have been examined.

Response to Arguments

- 5. Regarding the previous 35 USC § 101 rejection, applicant has amended claim 25 to include "by a device" and "with a specialized reading device". The claim, as now presented, is tied to a particular apparatus, and accordingly, the 35 USC § 101 rejection is rescinded.
- 6. Regarding the prior art rejections, applicant has amended claim 25 to include "a two-stage process that compares ascertained graphic information to expected graphic information". Accordingly, the Cordery et al. (US 6,058,190) has been brought in.
- 7. However, the second stage of the comparison, as currently written, contains a conditional element. Regarding the conditional elements in the claims (e.g. claim 25 recites "if there is a discrepancy . . . in the first comparison"), they too have been considered. However, Applicants are reminded that optional or conditional elements do not narrow the claims because they can always be omitted. See e.g. MPEP §2106 II C: "Language that <u>suggests or makes optional</u> but does not require steps to be performed or does not limit a claim to a particular structure does not limit the scope of a claim or claim limitation. [Emphasis in original.]" Accordingly, in claim 25, if there is not a discrepancy in the first comparison, the particular limitation, as written, does not narrow the claim.
- In addition, see updated rejection below.

Art Unit: 3628

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

- 10. Claim 25 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention
- 11. Claim 25 recites the limitations "the area" and "the mail processing station". There is insufficient antecedent basis for these limitations in the claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

12. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

- The factual inquiries set forth in Graham v. John Deere Co., 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:
 - Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
 - Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
 - Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
 - Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.
- Claims 25-27, 33-41, 43-48 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over McLintock (U.S. Pub. 2003/0212644 A1) in view of Wells et al. (U.S. 6,510,992) in view of Cordery et al. (US 6,058,190).

Claim 25:

Art Unit: 3628

McLintock, as shown, discloses the following limitation(s):

associating the mailpiece with a mailing type on the basis of the ascertained graphic information

(see at least McLintock ¶ 0010);

• identifying at least one of the mailpiece, a mailer, and a recipient's address on the basis of the

mailing type (see at least McLintock ¶ 0010);

· determining a number of mailpieces processed for the mailer from the identified mailpiece, the

mailer or the recipient's address (See at least McLintock ¶ 0011);

· combining the ascertained graphic information from a plurality of mailpieces (see at least

McLintock ¶¶ 0019-0024);

· determining a delivery structure from the combination of graphic information (see at least

McLintock ¶ 0025):

comparing the number of mailpices processed for the mailer and the delivery structure to a

delivery job batch (see at least McLintock ¶ 0041);

comparing the delivery job batch to a customer data record that contains one of a prepaid

postage value and a limit postage value (see at least McLintock ¶ 0041);

· wherein the delivery job batch [is transmitted by a customer] or created if a customer does not

transmit the delivery job batch (see at least McLintock ¶ 0025).

McLintock does not disclose specifically disclose the following limitation, but Wells et al., does:

ascertaining the graphic information (see at least Wells et al. col. 2, lines 12-15);

· wherein the delivery job batch is transmitted by a customer [or created if a customer does not

transmit the delivery job batch] (see at least Wells et al. col. 7, lines 21-27)

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the

method of comparing and combining various mailpiece data with the technique of ascertaining the data

and transmitting a delivery job batch because the data could be used "to automatically perform mail

verification and acceptance processes" (Wells et al. col. 2, lines 15-16).

Regarding the limitations:

Art Unit: 3628

comparing the ascertained graphic information to expected graphic information and determining
an expected payment for the mailpiece from the comparison, wherein the comparison of the
ascertained graphic information to the expected graphic information is carried out in two stages
by making a first comparison between the detected graphic information to the expected graphic
information by a device in the area of the mail processing station, and

 if there is a discrepancy between the ascertained graphic information and the expected graphic information in the first comparison, making a second comparison between the ascertained graphic information and the expected graphic information with a specialized reading device associated with a central image processing unit.

Wells, in at least col. 6, lines 42-55, discloses comparing ascertained graphic information to expected graphic comparisons. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the method of comparing and combining various mailpiece data with the technique of checking for correct franking information so that the system "automatically measures the information by calculating and displaying parameters such as bulk postage rate . . . and additional postage due" (Wells et al. col. 6, lines 50-54).

McClintock/Wells does not specifically disclose a two-stage comparison, but Cordery, in at least col. 7, line 51-col. 8, line 8, discloses a local graphic processing unit ("computer recognition unit 108"), and if that scan is inadequate, sending the information to a central image processing unit ("cryptographic validation processor unit 112"). Examiner interprets the cryptographic validation processor unit to include a specialized reading device because the processor unit is reading the previously scanned information supplied by scanner 106. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the method of checking validity of payment with the technique of further processing the information by a second unit to further improve "acceptance or rejection of mail into a mail delivery stream" (Cordery col. 3, lines 58-59).

Examiner reminds Applicant, as pointed out above in Response to Arguments, the conditional limitation within claim 25 does not narrow the claim because it may be omitted. However, Cordery, as shown, discloses the limitation as presented.

Art Unit: 3628

Claim 26:

McLintock/Wells/Cordery, as shown above, discloses the limitations of claim 25. In addition, McLintock

also discloses the following limitation(s):

· wherein the step of ascertaining includes ascertaining at least one additional piece of payment-

relevant information about the mailpiece (see at least McLintock ¶ 0010 showing a batch mail

indicium).

Claim 27:

McLintock/Wells/Cordery as shown above, discloses the limitations of claim 25. In addition, Wells also

discloses the following limitation(s):

· wherein the step of ascertaining the delivery structure includes checking whether the mailpiece

was pre-sorted by the mailer (see at least Wells et al. col. 6, line 44).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the

method of comparing and combining various mailpiece data with the technique of checking for presorting

in order to allow a system that "automatically measures the information by calculating and displaying

parameters such as bulk postage rate . . . and additional postage due" (Wells et al. col. 6, lines 50-54).

Claim 33:

McLintock/Wells/Cordery as shown above, discloses the limitations of claim 25. In addition, Wells also

discloses the following limitation(s):

· wherein the step of ascertaining the graphic information includes ascertaining an identification

number for the mailpiece and invoicing the mailpiece according to the identification number (see

at least Wells et al. col. 7, lines 58-59)

Wells does not specifically disclose using an identification number, but McLintock discloses using a

unique stampcode (see at least McLintock \P 0029). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in

the art at the time of the invention to combine the method of comparing and combining various mailpiece

Art Unit: 3628

data with the technique of using the information for billing in order that "the mailer customer's account is charged for additional postage" (Wells et al. col. 7, lines 58-59).

Claim 34:

McLintock/Wells/Cordery as shown above, discloses the limitations of claim 25. In addition, Wells also discloses the following limitation(s):

 wherein the step of ascertaining the graphic information includes ascertaining a customer number for the mailpiece and invoicing the mailpiece according to the customer number (see at least

Wells et al. col. 7, lines 58-59).

Wells does not specifically disclose using a customer number, but McLintock discloses using a unique stampcode (see at least McLintock ¶ 0029). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the method of comparing and combining various mailpiece data with the technique of using the information for billing in order that "the mailer customer's account is charged for additional postage" (Wells et al. col. 7. lines 58-59).

Claim 35:

McLintock/Wells/Cordery as shown above, discloses the limitations of claim 25. In addition, McLintock also discloses the following limitation(s):

 including one of the step of ascertaining an invoicing database on the basis of the number of mailpieces processed for the mailer and the step of ascertaining the invoicing database on the basis of the delivery structure (see at least McLintock ¶ 0041).

Claim 36:

McLintock/Wells/Cordery as shown above, discloses the limitations of claim 25. In addition, Wells also discloses the following limitation(s):

 transmitting the delivery job batch to a customer data management system, the customer data management system determining whether there are discrepancies between an invoicing data

Page 8

Application/Control Number: 10/541,288

Art Unit: 3628

record and the delivery job batch, and if there are discrepancies, the customer data management

system recording the discrepancies in a differential protocol (see at least Wells et al. col. 3, lines

16-18).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the

method of comparing and combining various mailpiece data with the technique of verifying the mailpieces

sent because this system "ensures correct postage payments" (Wells et al. col. 3, lines 18-19).

Claim 37:

McLintock/Wells/Cordery as shown above, discloses the limitations of claim 25. Regarding the limitation:

· checking whether the customer has transmitted the delivery job batch, and if the customer has

not transmitted the delivery job batch, generating a delivery job batch automatically.

Wells et al. in at least col. 7, lines 21-27, discloses a customer submitting a delivery job batch, and

McLintock, in at least ¶ 0011, discloses creating a delivery job batch. It would have been obvious to

combine the method of checking for a transmitted delivery job batch before creating one because

"verification has been completed at the mailer customer site, and the verification has been automatically

transmitted to the Postal Service, there is no further need for verification (Wells et al. col. 7, lines 45-48).

Claim 38:

McLintock/Wells/Cordery as shown above, discloses the limitations of claim 25. In addition, Wells also

discloses the following limitation(s):

• issuing a delivery confirmation to the mailer on the basis of the graphic information (see at least

Wells et al. col. 4, lines 3-4).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the

method of comparing and combining various mailpiece data with the technique of allowing delivery

confirmation because the mailer could then track the mailpieces.

Claim 39:

Art Unit: 3628

McLintock/Wells/Cordery as shown above, discloses the limitations of claim 38. In addition, Wells also discloses the following limitation(s):

 wherein the delivery confirmation contains one or more components of the delivery structure (see at least Wells et al. col. 9, 28-31).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the method of comparing and combining various mailpiece data with the technique of allowing delivery confirmation because the mailer could then track the mailelieces.

Claim 40:

McLintock/Wells/Cordery as shown above, discloses the limitations of claim 25. In addition, Wells also discloses the following limitation(s):

checking the authenticity of franking information by using the mailing type, transmitting the
mailpieces to a reading device and transmitting the graphic information of each mailpiece,
according to the mailing type, to a specialized reading device that checks the authenticity of each
particular type of franking (see at least Wells et al. col. 6, lines 42-48).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the method of comparing and combining various mailpiece data with the technique of checking for correct franking information so that the system "automatically measures the information by calculating and displaying parameters such as bulk postage rate . . . and additional postage due" (Wells et al. col. 6, lines 50-54).

Claim 41:

McLintock/Wells/Cordery as shown above, discloses the limitations of claim 40. In addition, Wells also discloses the following limitation(s):

 ascertaining the graphic information is associated with a type of franking by means of an image processing unit (see at least Wells et al. col. 6, lines 42-48).

Art Unit: 3628

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the method of comparing and combining various mailpiece data with the technique of checking for correct franking information so that the system "automatically measures the information by calculating and

displaying parameters such as bulk postage rate . . . and additional postage due" (Wells et al. col. 6, lines

50-54).

Claim 43:

McLintock/Wells/Cordery as shown above, discloses the limitations of claim 25. In addition, McLintock also discloses the following limitation(s):

 comparing the ascertained graphic information to an expected graphic information and transmitting any differences to a central image processing unit for another comparison (see at

least McLintock ¶ 0036).

Claim 46:

McLintock/Wells/Cordery as shown above, discloses the limitations of claim 25. In addition, Wells also discloses the following limitation(s):

 transmitting the detected graphic information and any accompanying information to an image processing machine (see at least Wells et al. col. 6, lines 42-55; col. 7, lines 10-20).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the method of comparing and combining various mailpiece data with the technique of checking the mailpieces against qualified presort standards so that unqualified mailpieces can be sorted out (Wells et al. col. 7, lines 17-20).

Claim 47:

McLintock/Wells/Cordery as shown above, discloses the limitations of claim 46. In addition, Wells also discloses the following limitation(s):

Art Unit: 3628

wherein the accompanying information includes results from comparing the detected graphic

information and the expected graphic information (see at least Wells et al. col. 6, lines 42-55; col.

7, lines 10-20).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the

method of comparing and combining various mailpiece data with the technique of checking the mailpieces

against qualified presort standards so that unqualified mailpieces can be sorted out (Wells et al. col. 7,

lines 17-20).

Claim 48:

McLintock/Wells/Cordery as shown above, discloses the limitations of claim 25. In addition, Wells also

discloses the following limitation(s):

• sorting the mailpieces as a function of the detected graphic information (see at least Wells et al.

col. 7, lines 10-20).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the

method of comparing and combining various mailpiece data with the technique of sorting the mailpieces

so that unqualified mailpieces can be sorted out (Wells et al. col. 7, lines 17-20).

15. Claims 28-32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over

McLintock/Wells/Cordery in view of Vaghi (U.S. Pub. 2004/0064326 A1).

Claim 28:

McLintock/Wells/Cordery. as shown above, discloses the limitations of claim 27. Wells et al. discloses

checking the pre-sort status (see at least col. 6, line 44), but does not disclose the basis of the pre-sort.

However, Vaghi, does:

wherein the step of determining the delivery structure further includes checking whether the pre-

sorting was carried out on the basis of addresses of the recipient (see at least Vaghi ¶ 0086).

Art Unit: 3628

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the method of comparing and combining various mailpiece data that is presorted with the technique of presorting by address in order to allow the system that "automatically measures the information by calculating and displaying parameters such as bulk postage rate... and additional postage due" (Wells

et al. col. 6, lines 50-54).

Claim 29:

McLintock/Wells/Cordery as shown above, discloses the limitations of claim 27. Wells et al. discloses checking the pre-sort status (see at least col. 6, line 44), but does not disclose the basis of the pre-sort. However, Vaghi, does:

wherein the step of determining the delivery structure further includes checking whether the pre-

sorting was carried out on the basis of postal codes of the recipient (see at least Vaghi ¶ 0086).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the

method of comparing and combining various mailpiece data that is presorted with the technique of presorting by zip code in order to allow the system that "automatically measures the information by calculating and displaying parameters such as bulk postage rate . . . and additional postage due" (Wells

et al. col. 6. lines 50-54).

Claim 30:

McLintock/Wells/Cordery as shown above, discloses the limitations of claim 27. Wells et al. discloses checking the pre-sort status (see at least col. 6, line 44), but does not disclose the basis of the pre-sort. However, Vachi, does:

 wherein the step of determining the delivery structure further includes checking whether the mailpieces were pre-sorted according to mailing properties (see at least Vachi ¶ 0086).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the method of comparing and combining various mailpiece data that is presorted with the technique of presorting by mail properties such as size in order to allow the system that "automatically measures the

Art Unit: 3628

information by calculating and displaying parameters such as bulk postage rate . . . and additional

postage due" (Wells et al. col. 6, lines 50-54).

Claim 31:

McLintock/Wells/Cordery as shown above, discloses the limitations of claim 27. Wells et al. discloses

checking the pre-sort status (see at least col. 6, line 44), but does not disclose the basis of the pre-sort.

However, Vaghi, does:

· wherein the step of determining the delivery structure further includes checking whether the pre-

sorting was carried out according to one or more size specifications (see at least Vaghi ¶ 0086).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the

method of comparing and combining various mailpiece data that is presorted with the technique of

presorting by mail properties such as size in order to allow the system that "automatically measures the

information by calculating and displaying parameters such as bulk postage rate . . . and additional

postage due" (Wells et al. col. 6, lines 50-54).

Claim 32:

McLintock/Wells/Cordery as shown above, discloses the limitations of claim 27. Wells et al. discloses

checking the pre-sort status (see at least col. 6, line 44), but does not disclose the basis of the pre-sort.

However, Vaghi, does:

· wherein the step of determining the delivery structure further includes checking whether the pre-

sorting was carried out according to the weight of the mailpieces (see at least Vaghi ¶ 0086).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the

method of comparing and combining various mailpiece data that is presorted with the technique of

presorting by mail properties such as weight in order to allow the system that "automatically measures the

information by calculating and displaying parameters such as bulk postage rate . . . and additional

postage due" (Wells et al. col. 6, lines 50-54).

Art Unit: 3628

16. Claim 43 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over McLintock/Wells/Cordery

in view of Official Notice.

Claim 42:

McLintock/Wells/Cordery as shown above, discloses the limitations of claim 40. With regard to the

limitation of:

selecting the specialized reading device as a function of the current capacities of available

reading devices.

Wells et al., in at least col. 6, lines 42-48, discloses capturing and analyzing mailpieces for authentic

information, but does not specifically disclose selecting a particular reading device on the basis of

available reading devices. However, the Examiner takes Official Notice that it is old and well known in

the art to choose a processing machine based on its availability and capabilities. It would have been

obvious to combine the method of checking mailpieces for authenticity with the technique of choosing an

available and capable machine in order to expedite efficient and fast processing of the mailpieces.

Examiner would also like to point out that Official Notice was used in the office actions mailed on 10 June

2008 to indicate that it is old and well known in the art to choose a processing machine based on availability and capability. Since applicant has not attempted to traverse this Official Notice statement,

examiner is taking the common knowledge or well-known statement to be admitted prior art.

This way, it is clearly on the record that this is being considered to be admitted prior art. If applicant does

not respond to this statement, then he will not be able to later on in prosecution.

Page 15

Application/Control Number: 10/541,288

Art Unit: 3628

Conclusion

 $\label{prop:cond} \mbox{Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action.}$

Accordingly, THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the

extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from

the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date

of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH

shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action

is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of

the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX

MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or concerning this

communication or earlier communications from the Examiner should be directed to Kevin H. Flynn

whose telephone number is 571.270.3108. The Examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday,

9:30am-5:00pm. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the Examiner's

supervisor, John W. Hayes can be reached at 571.272.6708.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application

Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from

either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through

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free).

Any response to this action should be mailed to:

Commissioner of Patents

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Alexandria, VA 22313

Art Unit: 3628

or faxed to 571-273-8300.

Hand delivered responses should be brought to the United States Patent and Trademark
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/Kevin H. Flynn/ Examiner, Art Unit 3628 30 December 2008

/Igor N. Borissov/ Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3628